



NATO's cosmic humiliation

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The Ukraine Charade, Revisited

Desperate to maintain control, US elites manipulate the narrative while pursuing aggressive militarization. However, Russia's strategic moves and China's growing influence pose significant challenges to Western hegemony.

By **Pepe Escobar**



Selected players scattered around the Beltway silos of power, diligently working as messengers for the people who really run the show in the Hegemon, have concluded that a no holds barred confrontation with Russia would lead to the collapse of all of NATO; undo decades of US iron grip on Europe; and ultimately cause the Empire's downfall.

Playing brinkmanship games sooner or later would meet the indestructible red lines inbuilt in the unmovable Russian object.

US elites are smarter than that. They may excel on calculated risk. But when the stakes are this high, they know when to hedge and when to fold.

The "loss" of Ukraine – now a graphic imperative – is not worth risking the loss of the whole Hegemonic ride. That would be too much for the Empire to lose.

So even as they get increasingly desperate with the accelerated imperial plunge into a geopolitical and geoeconomic abyss, they're frantically changing the narrative – a domain in which they excel.

And that explains why discombobulated European vassals in NATO-controlled EU are now in total panic.

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Davos this week offered bucket loads of Orwellian salad. The key, frantic messages: War is peace. Ukraine is *not* (italics mine) losing and Russia is not winning. Hence Ukraine needs way more weaponizing.

Yet even Norwegian Wood Stoltenberg was told to toe the new line that matters: "NATO is not moving into Asia. It's China that is coming close to us." That certainly adds a new wacky meaning to the notion of moving tectonic plates.

Keep the Forever Wars engine running

There is a total void of "leadership" in Washington. There is no "Biden". Just Team Biden: a corporate combo featuring low-rent messengers such as de facto neocon Little Blinkie. They do what they're told by wealthy "donors"

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and the financial-military interests that really run the show, reciting the same old cliché-saturated lines day after day, bit players in a Theatre of the Absurd.

Only one exhibit suffices.

Reporter: "Are the airstrikes in Yemen working?"

The President of the United States: "Well, when you say working, are they stopping the Houthis? No. Are they gonna continue? Yes."

The same in what passes for "strategic thinking" applies to Ukraine.

The Hegemon is not being lured into fighting in West Asia – as much as the genocidal arrangement in Tel Aviv, in tandem with US Zio-cons, wants to drag it into a war on Iran.

Still, the imperial machine is being steered to keep the Forever Wars engine running, non-stop, at varying speeds.

The elites in charge are way more clinical than the whole Team Biden. They know they will not win in what will soon be country 404. But the tactical victory, so far, is massive: enormous profits out of the frantic weaponizing; totally gutting European industry and sovereignty; reducing the EU to the sub-status of a lowly vassal; and from now on plenty of time to find new proxy warriors against Russia – from Polish and Baltic fanatics to the whole Takfiri-neo ISIS galaxy.

From Plato to NATO, it may be too early to state it's all over for the West. What is nearly over is the current battle, centered on country 404. As Andrei Martynov himself stresses, it was up to Russia, once again, "to start dismantling what today has become the house of demons and horror in the West and by the West, and she is doing it again in a Russian way – by defeating it on the battlefield."

That complements the detailed analysis expressed on the new hand grenade of a book by French historian Emmanuel Todd.

Yet the war is far from over. As Davos once again made it quite clear, they will not give up.

Chinese wisdom rules that, "when you want to hit a man with an arrow, first hit his horse. When you want to capture all the bandits, first capture their chief."

The "chief" – or chiefs – certainly are far from being captured. BRICS+ and de-dollarization may have a shot at it, starting this year.

The plutocratic endgame

Under this framework, even massive US-Ukraine corruption involving rings and rings of theft from lavish US "aid", as recently revealed by former Ukrainian MP Andrey Derkach, is a mere detail.

Nothing has been done or will be done about it. After all, the Pentagon itself fails every audit. These audits, by the way, did not even include the income from the massive multi-billion dollar heroin operation in Afghanistan – with Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo set up as the distribution center for Europe. The profits were pocketed by US intel operatives off the books.

When fentanyl replaced heroin as a domestic US plague, it was pointless to continue occupying Afghanistan – subsequently abandoned after two decades in pure Helter Skelter mode, leaving behind over \$7 billion in weapons.

It's impossible to describe all these Empire-centric concentric rings of corruption and institutionalized organized crime to a brainwashed collective West. The Chinese, once again, to the rescue. Taoist Zhuangzi (369 – 286 B.C.): "You can't talk about the ocean to a frog living in a well, you can't describe ice to a summer midge, and you can't reason with an ignoramus."

NATO's cosmic humiliation in Ukraine notwithstanding, this proxy war against Russia, against Europe and against China remains the fuse that could light up a WWII before the end of this decade. Who will decide it is an extremely rarefied plutocracy. No, not Davos: these are only their clownish mouthpieces.

Russia has reactivated a military factory system at lightning speed – now standing at about 15 times the capacity of January 2022. Along the front line there are about 300,000 troops, plus in the back two pincer armies of hundreds of thousands of mobile troops in each pincer being prepared to create a double envelopment of the Ukrainian Army and annihilate it.

Even if country 404 is utterly defeated in 2024, once again it's imperative to stress it: this is far from over. The leadership in Beijing fully understands that the Hegemon is such a disintegrating wreck, on the way to secession, that the only way to hold it together would be a world war. It's time to re-read T.S. Eliot in more ways than one: "We had the experience but missed the meaning, / and approach to the meaning restores the experience."

Pepe Escobar, Independent geopolitical analyst, writer and journalist.

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Regards and best wishes.

The AV Team.

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